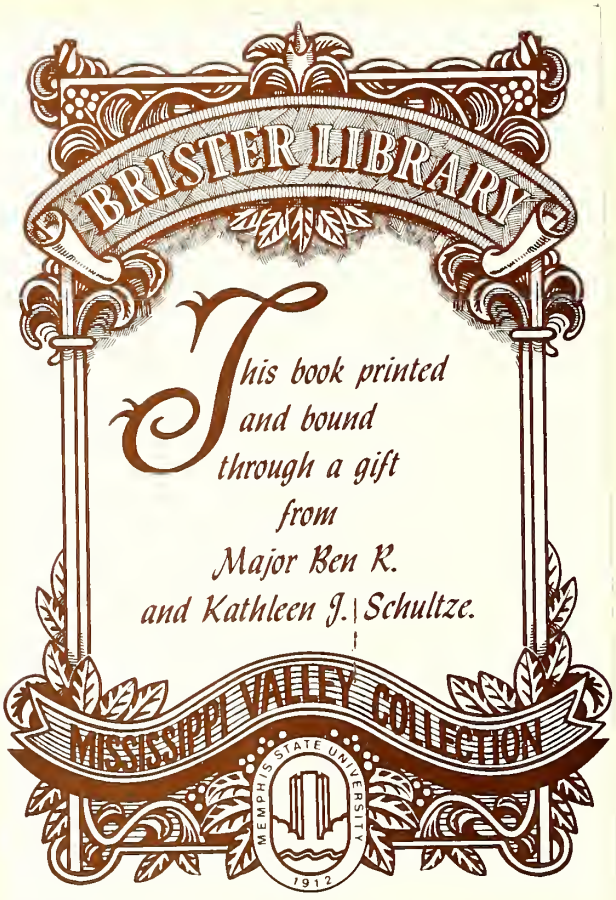
AN ORAL HISTORY OF WOMEN LEADERS OF MEMPHIS
INTERVIEW WITH DAN PORTER

BY - ELEANOR McKAY
TRANSCRIBED - BETTY WILLIAMS
ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE
MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY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WOMEN LEADERS OF THE MID-SOUTH

INTERVIEW WITH DAN PORTER

JUNE 20, 1979

BY

MS. ELEANOR McKAY

TRANSCRIBER: BETTY WILLIAMS

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE

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PLACE Memphis, TN

DATE 20 June 1979

(Interviewee)

(For the Mississippi Valley Archives of the John Willard Brister Library of Memphis State University)

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THIS IS A PROJECT OF THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY. THE PROJECT IS "WOMEN LEADERS OF THE MID-SOUTH". THE DATE IS JUNE 20, 1979 AND THE PLACE IS MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE. THE INTERVIEW IS WITH MR. DAN PORTER, WHO IS IN SISTER BONIA'S CODE NORTH PROGRAM. THE INTERVIEW IS BY ELEANOR MCKAY, CURATOR OF THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY COLLECTION OF BRISTER LIBRARY OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY. TRANSCRIBED BY BETTY WILLIAMS.

MR. PORTER: I am a project director of a community crime prevention program of Code North, Inc. Code North, Inc. is a non-profit community organization which was started by the Director Sister Elizabeth Bonia. As the project director of a crime prevention program it is my responsibility to fullfill the goals of the program and there are several goals. One general goal is: To reduce incidence of crime within a thirty-block target area. The target area is bounded on the east by Manassas and the north by Chelsea and west by Third Street and the south by Jackson and Auction. The components of this entire program consist of: (1) Identify thirty block club leaders within a thirty-block area and training each of these leaders to organize the block clubs. These block clubs will have various activities mostly which will be anti-crime related. (2) Model home wherein will be established a home intervention program. The home intervention program will be addressing the problems of parents who are in need of training because of child abuse.

(3) The third part of the program consists of counseling which is vitally needed by young adults - male and female - which have dropped out of high school. The counseling will be both academic as well as vocational. The academic counseling will be given to those who are taking GED classes which are held twice a week and here at 702 Looney. The vocational counseling will be given to those young adults who have expressed an interest in learning one of the crafts, mainly carpentry, painting, plumbing, electrical work, etc. (4) The fourth component of this program will be addressing the needs of the senior citizens, particularly those who have become victims or who might become victims of some type of crime. It is our responsibility as a staff to develop programs or activities geared specifically for the elderly. As I indicated, the general purpose of the program is to decrease crime in a thirty-block area. We will go about decreasing the crime by developing and implementing activities which we feel are intra-crime related.

MS. ELEANOR MCKAY: Do you want to talk about the block club leaders now?

MR. PORTER: All right. How do we go about identifying a block-club leader? What we do is go knock on doors. Sometimes we may be referred to a Mrs. Smith over on Hill Avenue, a "dynamic person". We'll follow that lead up, but initially what we have to do is start out and cover each block within the target area and knock on doors and introduce ourselves and show our identification and then try to sell the residents on the idea of becoming involved with repetitively in trying to decrease crime, particularly on that street. If we are successful in selling our story to them then we proceed to give them a training

course--probably take only about two to three hours, depending on the individual's ability to comprehend what we are talking about.

MS. MCKAY: What kinds of things do you do in the training course?

MR. PORTER: Well, first of all we play the whole concept or idea of block club. What is the purpose of it and what is the block club and the purpose of it? How can a block club be beneficial to the community? One thing that we do is see if he or she likes the idea and then we go on to the second stage, teaching them how to recruit members into the block club. We will even demonstrate to them how to go about recruiting members. Once we feel that Mrs. Smith, the block club leader, has recruited a sufficient number of people then we convince her to call a meeting. Maybe it is the week after we have left or two weeks. We will even assist her in contacting them through our office here. We go out knocking on doors.

MS. MCKAY: You go out knocking on doors?

MR. PORTER: Right. Most of the time we don't have to do it because once we go on and introduce ourselves to Mrs. Smith's neighbors we were fortunate enough to get their names and we know what the address is and that they have a telephone. So when we get ready to have a meeting, we just call. That is the second phase and the third phase is to assist Mrs. Smith in drawing up an agenda. An interesting agenda, because you have to really make an impact on these people at that first meeting so that they will come back to the second meeting.

MS. MCKAY: What kinds of things would be on the agenda?

MR. PORTER: We'll have to explain to these people, what is a block club, the purpose of a block club, some of the activities of a block club to perform in the area--not all the activities will be anti-crime related such as cleaning up the street or cleaning up the yard, getting the grass cut by calling down to City Hall--Mayor's Office, calling the Community Development, someone down at City Hall will look into an abandoned house next door where winos are hanging out or it could be a possible place where a mugger will grab a person and that may be a woman and she may get raped. Those are some of the activities we would like for them to perform. Once we get the people at the first meeting, we will assist Mrs. Smith in conducting the meeting. Many people don't know how to conduct the meetings--don't know anything about parliamentary procedure.

Also there will be an organizational meeting. Maybe Mrs. Smith who is a block group leader wants an assistant, then she wants a secretary or maybe she wants a public relations person. So that the first meeting will be basically informational, as well as organizational.

MS. MCKAY: About how many people come to the Block Club?

MR. PORTER: A block club shouldn't consist of no more than about 16, but should be about 10. They are easier to handle.

MS. MCKAY: So that Mrs. Smith shouldn't be too uncomfortable.

MR. PORTER: No, no you don't want too many people. The more people that you add, the more uncomfortable she would be, and the more reluctant she would be to express herself. That, in

essense, is it and we are trying to establish thirty of these block clubs within the target area. Assigning each job, it can be difficult. We have to continue to recruit people. You are going to have casualties--people will move out and you will need someone to replace Mrs. Smith. So that I think, in essense is what we are doing with block clubs. As a service to the block clubs we will teach Mrs. Smith or someone she will appoint to use what we call an electrical engraving pin where you put your driver's license number on your valuables--stereo, camera equipment, radio--those things are top priority items that can be stolen because you can easily fence those through someone that will buy them. If you have a big decal on your window indicating that all of the items in your house have been marked with an engraving pin, a thief is more reluctant to break in and steal and realizes it is going to be harder if he steals the items that can be traced. You notice I said your driver's license number as opposed to your social security number, because the driver's license number can be traced in three minutes through the police department whereas your social security may take two weeks to two months, because the Federal Government is not swift to answer your request. That is one service.

Another service we offer the block clubs through our office is what we call home security checks. You'd be amazed how many people have thousands of dollar's worth of valuables, equipment, and merchandise in their homes. You look at the lock on the door and it only costs about three dollars. So it is not very logical for a person to have all this valuable equipment and merchandise in the home and then be very cheap in buying a lock for security. People do not realize that in a way the locks on their windows are invitations for a burglar to enter. Doors--just a plain door,

some doors are made of plywood, with a hollow inside --a burglar could kick that in. Certain locks that you use on your doors, a simple credit card can be used by wiggling it and can get right in. So we conduct a home security check for the members of the block club. We will advise them where the weaknesses are and how they can better secure their home. Those are the two services that we offer.

To assist the block club leaders we will take on the responsibility of providing speakers for a block club meeting. Speakers such as Lt. Jim Meyers of the Public Relations Unit of the Police Department who will come out free of charge with his Crime Prevention Van and demonstrate to the people home security and almost similar to what we do, demonstrate a type of home burglar alarms that you can buy, and also demonstrate the newest types of locks, dead-bolt lock versus the common lock. We can also provide speakers for them from City Hall, Probation Department, Penal Farm because since we are in this type of program the speakers are more ready to accept our requests. It strengthened their presentation too, because we work closely with them.

MS. MCKAY: How often might the block club meet? Do they have a regular meeting time like once a month?

MR. PORTER: We try to get them to hold them once a month. At least at the beginning or twice a month so that Mrs. Smith will be accustomed to calling and conducting block club meetings. We also get people from City Hall to come down and talk to us about the various departments in City Hall. We also get speakers from U.T. Mental Health, from the Public Health Department, Fire Department

and I mentioned the Police Department, Assessment Department (there was a big article in the newspaper about the devaluation of your property--assessment of your property) some people are interested in that. You noticed that I mentioned speakers that have nothing to do with crime prevention. We don't like to limit the block club leaders in the type of program meeting that they would like to have. The moment you start doing that we feel that we are controlling them and we want them to control themselves. If they have that latitude then the existence of the block club itself will hopefully be here after this program's over.

MS. MCKAY: What are some of the anti-crime activities that the block club takes on? Specifically anti-crime?

MR. PORTER: Well I have mentioned the marking of valuables, and the home security, maybe the block club leaders in that particular block club are concerned about the young people hanging around on the corner smoking marijuana or drinking wine or something. They want that stopped, you see. They will ask as to how to go about or what is the best approach to organizing something. We say, well the typical reaction would be to get on the phone and call the cops. Ninety-nine out of a hundred times it doesn't stop them because once the cops come and then when they leave the kids are back at it again. While working for this program, through community organization, we can meet with the kids hanging out on the corner, call them into the office and say, "Let's sit down and apparently you young people don't have anything to do," or, "Why don't we start some type of acitvity for you. A basketball game

or maybe you would like to have movies once a week or something else." And [I would] go to the Block Club leader and say, "These kids would like to have something to do. They'd like to have some movies. Would you be willing to work as a volunteer with us? We want to have some refreshments afterwards down here at United Methodist Church or over here at Holy Names." So you have got Block Club leaders working with this kid, appealing for better relations, breaking down that hostility that may exist between the Block Club members and those kids on the corner. If you go after the kids in the wrong way, they will start taunting you or harassing you and then you have a real problem on your hands. That's one activity.

Abandoned houses--old house is beneficial to a thief or a mugger--Abandoned houses are before you know it places where winos sleep in there. That doesn't help. Also young people can congregate in there and use it as a "pot house". We can suggest an activity of cleaning up vacant lots, removing old cars(get old cars off of lots). Have a festival, or have a street dance or anything which keeps the community together.

Show the Block Club leaders that we must have concern for the next door neighbor. You would be amazed here in the city of Memphis people who live next door and don't even know their names, don't even know who they are. That in itself helps potential burglars. For instance that you live on Peabody and you are going on a vacation or something and who do you turn to, to let them know you are going on vacation. If you take newspapers you have to stop the news boy from throwing it. A pile of newspapers out front, a thief can come along and right away he'll know

you aren't at home. And your mail box can be stuffed full of mail and right away you have given him an indication that you are not at home. But if you had a neighbor across the street who would come over and take that mail out of the box everyday or who would pick up your newspapers every day you see, then the thief would be a little more hesitant. If you are very good neighbors, you could give the neighbor a key, who would maybe come over and turn your lights on for you and come back the next day and turn them off. That wards off potential burglars. I could go on with various types of activities that the Block Club members are doing.

MS. MCKAY: You want to?

MR. PORTER: (Laughter) Well why don't I give you an example of Block Watch. This is the most effective activity that a Block Club could perform. What is a Block Watch? As members personally try to meet the problem I think we feel that the "Nosey Rosy" on the street is by far the most important person. Because that "Nosey Rosy" knows everything that goes on. To be effective you need a lot of "Nosey Rosies" to look out their windows at all times of day and all times of night to see what is going on. Or if you had a Block Watch, members of the Block Club get together and say we are going to have a block watch and I'll be watching out the house from 9 to 10 and maybe the lady across the street will watch from 10 to 11 and somebody else will watch from 11 to 12. If you feel that most people on that street are in, the doors are closed, and they are secure unless, you have somebody getting off at 11 and they have to ride the bus along the way, if you know one another you know that

Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Jones are going to get off that bus at 12:30 and we'll have one of the members of the block watch looking out, watching her when she gets off the bus and watch till she gets home and closes the door and that's fine. A Block Watch can be very very effective. We had a case here somewhat humorous, but also serious, one of the ladies, a block club member, she was attending a meeting right here and while she was here at the meeting, a van backed up to her house and men jumped out of the truck, opened her door and started moving her furniture out. Somehow the neighbor across the street got curious. And the neighbor across know that the lady was attending this meeting. So she called and said what is going on over at your house. To make a long story short the lady got out of here and went quickly back home and caught the fellows moving the furniture out and caught the fellows in the act. Eventually they were caught and arrested, but the nosey neighbor looking out the window discovered what was going on.

By having some people involved in Block Watch you can stop young people from stealing your hub caps off your car. Hub caps are very valuable--the young people know that they can fence them very easily. Stripping of your car--your car will break down in this community--you got to call and get AAA out here and they won't be able to come right away and you don't want to stay and maybe you will hail a cab down and leave the car. When you get back, the car may be stripped. But if we have somebody watching out the windows and looking, if they see some suspicious children looking at the car, they can get on the phone and call the police. The police can come out and patrol them and make them go away.

Fire for instance. People looking out their windows--we had a case over here on Keel Avenue. One of the houses on Code North was looking

out her window and she saw the blaze coming up the roof of the house. She got on the phone and called the fire company right away. Sister Elizabeth who is the manager of that didn't know anything about it. So she called the fire company and then she called Sister Elizabeth and told Sister Elizabeth about the fire and told she had already called the fire company. You see, a lot of activities can be performed by members of the Block Club. And it doesn't cost you a dime. Just a phone call and that is about all.

The second area would be the academic counsel given. We've had almost four hundred young men and women--young adults, teeenagers who have expressed an interest in becoming participants or employees of this program or serviced by this program. My counselor handles this whole area--over 400 young people signed up for this program to become participants or to be serviced. If they become participants, say I hire a teacher or an instructor to instruct them in upholstery I can go through the file and draw the names of those young people who have expressed an interest in something similar in how to repair furniture or how to do upholstery work. These young people need some counseling--they are not here on time and don't have good work habits. That's where a counselor comes in and says, "Get up on time, get to work." You know,you have working hours, and you have to get proper rest and you want to do a good job. Some of these people who are in academic training have not finished high school. They dropped out so we have convinced themthat they should join our GED class which is held on Tuesdays and Thursday nights from six to eight. Also my counselor is there to help them if they have any problems

in English or math or etc. We in this program, decided that my counselors should follow them through not only academically, but also with their vocational training. We have a teacher who is paid by the Board of Education who does instructing (I mean it doesn't cost them anything.) But I have my counselor here present not only to take roll but who can help those young people who may come late to class and have to leave early because of some particular problem or who may be having trouble and are afraid to tell the teacher because they don't think the teacher has the time to work with them. So that the Counselor is like something that is support or back up for the instructor during the time when the instruction is going on. Some young people are not working. They may want to take the GED and they need a job. The Counselor has several hundred contacts with employers where she can just pick up the phone and call and find out, "Do you have a job out there for a young man, 18 years old, etc, high school drop-out, only 10th grade education, do you have any place for him"? A lot of employers know we are in existence and they will call here to ask if we have a certain type of individual who is willing to work for so many dollars an hour. So it is a referral assistance too, which is also helpful to these other people who are in vocational academic training component.

The third area is the model home which is located at 622 Keel (it's the blue house). Within that model home is what they call Home Intervention Program. The Home Intervention Program runs the gamut of courses that are taught--Home Management, Child Care, Psychological Aspects of being a mother. Several other areas that I am not too familiar with

these areas are going on over there. On staff we have a nun that is a psychologist. She is on the faculty at U.T. and works under University Mental Health Center. They provide the staff for that Home Intervention Program.

Then the support area has to do with the incidence of crime against the elderly. It is up to the director to determine what type of activities are necessary to reduce these incidents of crime against the elderly. So far I have developed one particular activity and that is education to inform the senior citizens about the type of crimes that are committed against the elderly. It is up to the director to determine what type of activities are necessary to reduce these incidents of crime against the elderly. So far I have developed one particular activity and that is education to inform the senior citezens about the type of crimes that are committed against the elderly. Our first attempt was a conference--a one day conference that we held for the elderly. We had a panel that consisted of about 5 or 6 people--Police Department, Census Bureau, Mental Health Center over here on Beale Street (I think it is). We had a gentleman from the Tennessee Commission on the Aged. He's one of the Commissioners. We had someone from Harold Ford's office to speak about crimes against the elderly--yours truly. We showed films "Senior Power". All the actors and actresses are senior citizens and they would want to demonstrate how they defend themselves against attack of muggers, purse snatching, how they go about securing their homes, several other crime prevention techniques and tactics.

MS. MCKAY: About how many people came to this?

MR. PORTER: About 25. Dealing with senior citizens you have to understand that these people are (1) on fixed income, (2) they have limited transportation, (3) they don't have very much money to spend, so many of them go to the project meetings every day. By holding the conference on a weekday we had to work around their schedules and many of them like to watch the soap operas so you have to be cognizant of that when you are scheduling the developing conference and make sure it is over by three and make sure they break no later than a quarter till twelve to be able to get to the project meeting so that they can eat lunch. Because we were at least two blocks away we had to provide transportation for them. We had to get two wans to pick them up and take them to project meeting and wait for them and bring them back. We lost some of them because some of them didn't want to take a chance . They wanted to go on home so that they could watch their programs. Working with senior citizens you learn a lot. Believe me!

The second activity that I think, we are out of the developing stage now, I think we are about ready to implement it, is known as escort service for the senior citizens. Maybe you have witnessed on the first of the month senior citizens in the banks cashing their social security checks. Tellers just simply train to be bank officials, and sometimes they will ask senior citizens if they want large bills or small bills. Most of the time they will give senior citizens one dollar bills. If you got a check for a hundred dollars or two hundred dollars and can you imagine how many dollar bills that is--a big stack about like that. (demonstrated how big) If you notice senior citizens they all practically do it. They put a

rubber band around it and women stick it down in their breast or sometimes they pull up their dress in the bank and stick it down in their stockings. Men will have a tendency to shove it down in their pocket and walk on out. Now who is to tell that a potential mugger isn't standing inside the bank watching or on the outside waiting. Senior citizens have a tendency to establish a pattern and they don't change. They do the same thing every day over and over, day in and day out, year in and year out. When they have established a pattern like this it makes it easy for a potential mugger to jump the victim and take their money away from them. Women have a tendency to carry these large purses around with big handles on them. The one that made those things should be shot, because it is the best purse to be snatched--one with a big handle on the handbag. The person who is swinging it and usyally they'll be swinging it in their right hand and then while they are walking it will be swinging on the right side of them and a young person can come right by and just grab it and it is going to be almost impossible for them to hold on to it. In fact we tell them to put it over their shoulder and put this arm under it.

Lt. Meyers is like an expert in advising senior citizens about the purse they should carry. I was saying we plan to establish an escort service so that someone can accompany the senior citizens down to the bank on social security day and get the check cashed and zip them back home. We hope to utilize some young people who will accompany the senior citizens to the supermarket to do their shopping and bring them back home. Those are the two essential services that the senior citizens need. As far as going to project meetings they are usually within walking distance and

and ordinarily they will go with someone else. We tell the senior citizens not to travel individually, but in pairs. A mugger will rarely attack two people--they will attack one person, but not two. Don't travel alone, but travel in pairs. If you don't have anybody, call and we will send somebody down to escort you.

We are on the drawing board now trying to develop other types of crime prevention for senior citizens. We don't have those defined yet and no details.

MS. MCKAY: Okay. What is project MEET? (Memphis Encounters Eating Together) Is that Code North?

MR. PORTER: Project MEET is food provision type program. It is a federal program really. I can describe it. United Methodist down there qualifies to be a Project Meet type and I think it is Lutheran Services, Inc. that handles the grant from the Federal Government to provide lunches for senior citizens and there are various sites throughout the city. United Methodist happens to be one. Bickford Community Center over on Chelsea is one. So senior citizens just simply come to this place and they pay only a dollar for a varied nutritious lunch which they probably wouldn't get if they had to do it themselves. They would probably open a can of food or something like that.

Senior citizens have an I.D. card that qualifies them to get their lunch at minimum cost. I don't think you and I could buy a cheaper lunch for a dollar.

MS. MCKAY: No, I don't think so.

MR. PORTER: Now in terms of the youth--I haven't covered the youth--what we have done in these programs, I have developed and implemented what I call a Street Law Institute. Street Law Institute simply means that it is simply an activity that lasts about 8 weeks. Monday and Tuesday, 15 to 20 young people will come to this conference room and listen to presentations by young lawyers. They will be making presentations in the areas of torts--offenses against persons, felonies, crimes, bankruptcy, housing laws, welfare laws, installment buying, insurance (life and car), prison systems, the court systems and they will explain all these various laws on a very simple level to these young people. When we were explaining corrections, after the presentations are over, usually the next day we take them on field trips out to the penal farm or one of the transitional centers. After the presentations on the courts we take them down to the courts--traffic court, DWI court, circuit court, or regular city court so that they can talk to the judges when the court is in session. They listen to the judge conduct court when court is not in session and listen to the judge talk to them--question and answer type thing.

The purpose of this whole thing is to let these young people see another side of the law and of the criminal justice system. In the ghetto the average black or white ghetto kid only sees the police officer when he is coming down to bust somebody. That's the only time they see a police officer. Rarely do they stop an officer and hold a nice conversation with him. It always is that he is down here to pick up somebody or pass out a

a warrant. Almost what we call a negative side, so to speak. Our institute is used to show them the positive side. We've had police officers at the street level go down and talk with them. We take them down to the judges' chambers to sit and talk with a judge about being in trouble. That way they get a more positive outlook about the law and I think it gives them a healthy respect and it changes some of their negative attitudes about law in general. Most of them didn't realize that the law was for their protection. They thought the law was for somebody else's protection. Through the Street-Laws Institute we have attempted to change that type of image. We've held one--it was jointly sponsored by Code North-Crime Prevention program, Shelby State Department of Criminal Justice, and Memphis/Shelby County Department of Legal Services, Inc.--three sponsors of this Street-Law Institute. It was conducted for 8 weeks and is completed now and the young people have expressed a desire and are definitely going into law. So since we had speakers or presenters who were lawyers we simply refer them to these presenters and lawyers who will work closely with them to more or less instruct the kids what courses to take who have that interest in law.

Also many of the young people have expressed this strong desire now to go into college, whereas before entering the Street-Law Institute, they had no desire to go to college. As a matter of fact, some of them were going to drop out of school. The participants in this program consisted of people from junior high on through first year of college. So we feel that we established some healthy attitudes and changed a lot of negative attitudes through the Street-Law Institute. I'm excited about it because

this is my brain-child and I saw the results of it and naturally I am going to have more Street-Law Institutes to tell what this program is.

That is one way of addressing the needs of the young people in the area of crime prevention.

Realizing that we have a lot of nice little girls around here, and I told my staff that I wanted to do something for these girls. You know that motherhood starts at a very early age now--thirteen, and sometimes twelve. I wanted some of these girls to change their self-image. So what I did I enlisted the services of a former professional model--a person who used to be in the modeling business--had her own business. I enlisted her services and she was a paid employee of my staff. She taught an 8-week course in charm and modeling--teaching them all how to walk and buy clothes, what clothes to wear and what not to wear, what clothes a secretary would wear, and what clothes a secretary wouldn't wear and how to enter and exit from a car. Many other things--how to put on make-up and all--even people from cosmetic firms came down and taught the girls how to put the make-up on properly. The girls graduated on June 10 and they got a certificate which entitles them to model for The Bonnie Shop, Helen of Memphis, just because the instructor was a certified instructor through the state of Tennessee. She is consulted quite frequently by The Bonnie Shop, Helen of Memphis, Lowenstein's, Lerner's and other places. When they need girls to model, they call her and now she can refer some of these girls. In fact that has been a good way of reaching some of these girls here who were really excited about it.

MS. MCKAY: You said something about children aged thirteen and fourteen being mothers--aren't they already mothers by the time they get to this charm school?

MR. PORTER: It doesn't make any difference, it still helps. We had several who were there that were mothers. Also we developed and implemented conferences--one day conferences, two day conferences or three day conferences for youth. We just completed one yesterday on drugs and youth. We utilized people from the Memphis House who are professionals in the business of working with people with drugs. St. Joseph's Hospital--we utilized people as speakers and presenters to talk to these young people. We use people from the transitional houses or half-way house to bring some of their clients out so that the kids can have a dialogue with these folks. Alcoholics Anonymous people, we utilized people there to make presentations to these kids. They bring some of their clients with them--adults that don't mind instructing them--"don't do this, look what it did to me." We have these frequently so as to reach the kids and let them know what will happen and give them a better understanding about the types of crimes.

MS. MCKAY: Do you plan to offer more kinds of things now that it is summer? Not too much for young people to do now.

MR. PORTER: Oh yes. I keep something on the drawing board all the time.

MS. MCKAY: On your toes?

MR. PORTER: Yes.

MS. MCKAY: Do you want to say anything more? I'd like to know more about the grants that you said that all this was paid for by LEAA.

MR. PORTER: Oh yes. Sister Elizabeth roped this proposal up in March or April of 1978 and submitted it to Area Law Enforcement Assistance Administration which is an agency under the Department of Justice. It was approved and the Code North was awarded a quarter of a million dollars to develop and establish and implement the crime prevention program. Once it was approved and she told the Board that she would advertise for a director and yours truly was selected as a director to start the program on the bottom floor.

MS. MCKAY: What was your background before?

MR. PORTER: Well, I had been in administration for ten years--actually it was more that that, but I had been working in city government as director of the Civil Right Division in the city of Niagara Falls, New York. I know that is somewhat different from what I am doing now, but I was handling cases of discrimination in the area of employment and housing and education and public accommodations. I would actually defend my client against a sponsor or somebody who had discriminated against you. That was my role and being in the city department that I had, I had a lot of experience in administration, working with staff--I had to hire and fire my own staff--I already had that expereince when I came on board. Plus I was writing a lot of reports and personnel policy procedures--I know about that--and writing you little small programs, I

had that experience also and then managing techniques.

MS. MCKAY: You're from Memphis?

MR. PORTER: Yes, originally, a graduate of Booker Washington, 1950. I was gone twenty-eight years and came back last year.

MS. MCKAY: When this grant runs out do you think you will be able to get an extension?

MR. PORTER: The Sister has been talking about requesting refunding and if we do we will have to resubmit a proposal, but it has to be different than the one we submitted. It has to be different and I already have some ideas as to what will go into the new proposal. It will be a different emphasis.

MS. MCKAY: I know some programs go from year to year with slight shift of emphasis. Is that what you are going to do?

MR. PORTER: That is the idea. I want to get more young people involved. The older people--they are not out there stealing and snatching purses, but it is the young people who are doing it. I'd like to write up a new proposal with components addressing needs of some of the youngsters. I'd like to get some cultural programs, some more educational programs similar to the Street-Law Institute. I'd like to hire some of these young people in the program to work with youth in the community. I'm convinced young people can relate more to their own peers than I can. I am in the role of an adult.

MS. MCKAY: Is there any kind of concluding statement that you might want to make.

MR. PORTER: One thing I am very excited about this program and for more reasons than one and one of the reasons is that it is very challenging. You are constantly looking for solutions every day to certain problems. You are constantly looking for new ideas to develop activities to diversify. Also I am excited because this is the only one in the state of Tennessee. I think it is very good for the north Memphis area because it lets people in east Memphis, south Memphis, and Whitehaven down there know that we are still alive up here in north Memphis. Also I am equally excited because when I first came here, north Memphis had the highest crime rate--now north Memphis is fourth. East Memphis is number one, south Memphis is number two and at some unknown area is number three and north Memphis is number four. Thank you very much.

MS. MCKAY: Do you work much with the MIFA people? They have just done the history of the Greenlaw District. They say that history is a new force helping to bring people together. Are you able to interact with them?

MR. PORTER: I did when they were gathering data to develop a history book. As a matter of fact I have one of their history books on my desk.

MS. MCKAY: Yes. The Greenlaw.

MR. PORTER: Yeah, the Greenlaw, right. As a matter of fact

they did. They came here to talk to me and talked to every member of the staff. They wanted to know what we were doing, because we are a part of Code North. And if you notice in the history book they had listed Sister Elizabeth and Code North and what she is doing. Crime prevention is just another activity of Code North. Maybe two months from now you can come back and we'll be in another area. Code North will have another component.

MS. MCKAY: Thank you very much.

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